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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
28 June 1955

TO: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

SUBJECT: The Current Situation in Pakistan

1. The Moslem League has lost control of Pakistan's new Constituent Assembly as a result of the High Court's recent ruling that Governor General Ghulam Mohammad could not nominate candidates for the elections held on 21 June. Consequently, Pakistan will almost certainly experience considerable confusion in government during the next several months.

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3. Some other reshuffling of the prime minister's cabinet will also be necessary, since only half of its current members were elected to the assembly and the others will also have to be replaced or elected within 10 months.

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4. The new Constituent Assembly, which will convene on 7 July to commence work on a national constitution, will contain no majority group as did its predecessor. The Moslem League, which formerly held 56 of 79 seats, now holds only 25. The next largest group is Fazlul Huq's United Front from East Pakistan, which holds 16 seats but which probably will not vote as a solid bloc. The third major group is the Awami League, holding 12 seats, which also represents East Pakistan but whose members' allegiance may lie partly with Suhrawardy and partly with pro-Communist Maulana Bashani.

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5. Only nine of the 61 Moslem members of the new assembly were also members of the old. Figures on non-Moslem members are not available. With the exception of 18 West Pakistanis representing both the national and provincial governments, therefore, the new assembly consists of untried members whose views and loyalties are uncertain.

6. In the immediate future, the only firm focus of power will be the governor general and his close associates, who are essentially administrators. Among politicians, there will probably be intense maneuvering both before and after 7 July, involving members of assembly groups controlled respectively by Prime Minister Mohammad Ali or M. A. Gurmani, both of the Moslem League; Fazlul Huq of the United Front; and H. S. Suhrawardy of the Awami League. These groups will be highly unstable, their composition depending not only upon the success of each leader in increasing his following but also upon the nature of each issue debated in the assembly. It seems unlikely that any single group will soon emerge with even a stable plurality, and it is impossible to predict whether two of the three groups can combine with any permanence into a coalition with an absolute majority.

7. The battle for control will presumably be joined on 7 July with the assembly's first order of business--the election of 8 additional members to represent West Pakistani states and tribal areas. The size of each of the major political groupings would be materially increased by the addition of these 8 members, and there may be immediate dissension in establishing the procedure by which they are to be nominated and elected.

8. Other serious disputes in connection with constitution-making are likely. Among the first of these may be one over the powers of the chief of state relative to the legislature and another over the problem of centralism versus provincial autonomy in government. Others include the degree of homage to be paid to Islamic principles, parity or proportional representation for East and West Pakistan in the national legislature, the one-unit scheme for West Pakistan, and the question of one or two national languages.

9. Disagreement in the assembly may adversely affect Pakistan's economic stability by further undermining public confidence in the government. It is also possible that provincial rivalry will be so intense that assembly unity cannot easily be reached on the geographic apportionment of economic development projects and foreign aid funds.

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11. In the field of Afghan-Pakistani relations, Karachi apparently still holds the whip hand and can probably counter any Afghan effort to capitalize on seeming Pakistani weaknesses by stiffening its attitude on the dispute over the 30 March riots in Kabul.

12. There is a chance that Turkish pressure and Pakistan's own internal political situation will cause Karachi to adhere to the Turkish-Iraqi pact before 7 July. Delay until after the assembly meets may well result in indefinite postponement.

13. Governor General Ghulam Mohammad will almost certainly have to permit the Constituent Assembly to meet as planned and to allow it to function uninterrupted for some time. Recent High Court decisions on the constitutionality of his earlier actions have lessened his powers and limited the exercise of his own will. The Pakistani public has apparently been impressed by the court's independence in reaching its decisions and its emphasis on government by democratic principles.

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14. The governor general must therefore wait for confusion and ineffectiveness to become readily apparent before he takes steps to remedy the situation.

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If he feels it necessary, therefore, Ghulam Mohammad will probably again use his emergency powers to dismiss or dissolve the assembly and to rule with the aid of Mirza, Chaudhuri Mohammad Ali, and Ayub.

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16. However, Ghulam Mohammad would probably have much less public support and much greater overt criticism in 1955 than he had when he intervened in October 1954. [REDACTED]

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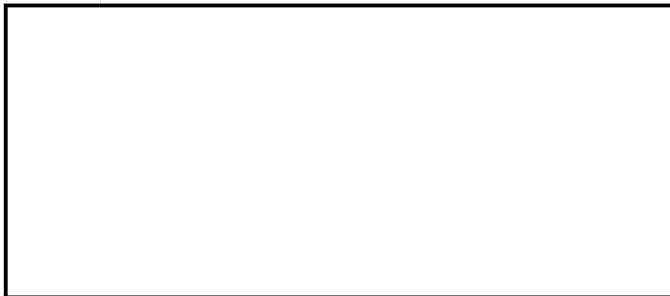
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[REDACTED] and the paucity of strong men capable of upholding his views, the weakening of central control might be accompanied by a weakening of American influence in Pakistan or by such outspoken criticism against a pro-American oligarchic clique as to discredit the United States in Pakistani eyes.

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